

International Meeting of Parliamentarians on Gender, Population and Development
(IMPGPD)

TOKYO DECLARATION On Gender, Population and Development 1 September 1995
Tokyo, Japan

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Gender, Population and Development

We, the parliamentarians from 57 countries attending the International Meeting of Parliamentarians on Gender, Population and Development, in Tokyo, Japan, on 31 August and 1 September 1995, in addressing ourselves to the issues before the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW),

1. Affirm the unique and important role of parliamentarians in ensuring adequate attention to gender, population and development issues and, correspondingly, recognize the need to develop networks among parliamentarians at the national, regional and interregional levels to strengthen exchange and cooperation;
2. Affirm our belief that equitable and universal access to education and reproductive health and rights, including sexual health and rights, are a pre-requisite for improving the living conditions of all individuals, including adolescents, and for empowering women and promoting their advancement;
3. Note that some improvements have occurred in the situation of women worldwide in education and health since the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1985, although the pace of progress has been uneven between and within regions and countries;
4. Recognize the major challenges that still lie ahead and the unacceptable conditions in which many women, particularly in rural and peri-urban communities, still find themselves as the result of the increasing feminization of poverty in developing countries and among certain segments of the population in developed countries;
5. Recognize also that women and children suffer first and foremost under conditions of war and civil strife and stress that there can be no equality or development without peace and justice;
6. Emphasize that the human rights of women and the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, as set forth in the Vienna Human Rights Declaration and Programme of Action;

7. Emphasize further, in this regard, that culture and religion should be interpreted and acted upon in such a way as to promote the human rights of women and the girl child;

8. Recognize that the FWCW is an integral part of a series of major United Nations international conferences that have taken place or are planned in the near future, including the Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and Habitat II, to find global solutions to development problems including those relating to gender;

9. Recognize also the critical importance of the FWCW in providing forward-looking goals and strategies that will aim at guaranteeing women equal rights and equal status with men and ensure that women are seen as agents of change since human development cannot be achieved unless women are assured these rights and status;

10. Recognize further that the empowerment of women and the creation of full and equal access for women to education that is relevant and necessary to their empowerment, to health, to employment, to political participation, and to economic resources, in particular, credit, land ownership and property rights, are fundamental in seeking a lasting solution to the interrelated issues of population, sustainable development and sustained economic growth;

11. Attach value to women's work, both inside and outside the home, and stress that women should receive equal pay for equal work and equal support within trade unions and other groups in the organized sector;

12. Emphasize the important role and experience of non-governmental organizations, including women's non-governmental organizations, in the design and implementation of population and development programmes;

13. Note with concern that the low economic and social status of women has a negative impact on their quality of life and that of their families and on their health, especially their reproductive and sexual health and rights;

14. Emphasize, in this regard, that this low economic and social status is a major factor in the continued high rates of infant and maternal morbidity and mortality; the rapid increase of HIV/AIDS infection among women worldwide; the exposure to practices that are harmful to women's health or

are dehumanizing including female genital mutilation, sex selection, early marriage and the commercialization of certain new reproductive technologies; and the prevalence of sexual abuse, exploitation and violence;

15. Note with concern the high, and in some cases increasing, rate of pregnancy among adolescents, in particular in the context of deteriorating economic conditions which have placed young women at increased risk of exploitation, prostitution, trafficking in women and children, drug abuse and unsafe sexual encounters and have diminished their already inadequate access to appropriate reproductive health information and services;

16. Urge the FWCW, in this regard, to reaffirm and reinforce the goals of and commitments made at previous United Nations Conferences and embodied in such documents as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies, the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights, the ICPD Programme of Action, and the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development;

17. Reaffirm our strong commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action, in particular to issues relating to the eradication of poverty; the political, economic and social empowerment of women; the elimination of all forms of violence against women; reproductive and sexual health and rights including information and services to adolescents, and the need to deal with the health impact of unsafe abortion as a major public health concern and to reduce the recourse to abortion through expanded and improved family planning services;

18. Emphasize the need to change the attitudes and practices of both men and women concerning their roles in and contributions to society and urge men and women to work in partnership to empower women and to bring about gender equality and equity in all spheres of economic, cultural, political and social life;

19. Emphasize further the need for women themselves to respect, value and give full support to other women to enable them to realize their full potential and to maximize their choices with respect to their various roles in society;

20. Recognize, in this regard, the important role of the media in eliminating stereotypes in all types of communication that reinforce existing inequalities between males and females and undermine girls' self-esteem.

Call to Action

Given our unique role in civil society as legislators and representatives of the people, we call on parliamentarians everywhere to:

21. Urge Governments to honour the commitments made at previous international and regional conferences and to allocate the resources pledged under the respective action plans and programmes;

22. Urge Governments to integrate gender perspectives into their development strategies, policies and programmes; to include equality and equity as basic rights in national and regional constitutions; to enact national legislation to ensure such integration, especially in population and development activities, and assure that, by the year 2005, women constitute at least 50 per cent of the membership of all governmental bodies, including elected and appointed positions at international, national and local levels; and to establish or strengthen mechanisms to monitor and evaluate progress in these areas;

23. Enact legislation to enable Governments to formulate and implement policies and programmes to improve the legal, health, social and economic status and rights of women and to promote the equal involvement of men in reproductive health, child-rearing and household responsibilities;

24. Encourage Governments to provide comprehensive health education in the curricula of primary and secondary schools with the aim of improving the overall health status of women and girls and promoting responsible partnership;

25. Appeal to Governments that have not done so to sign the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, to have their parliaments ratify the Convention and to monitor its implementation;

26. Urge Governments to develop policies and laws that better support the family, contribute to its stability and take into account its plurality of forms, particularly the growing number of single-parent households and households headed by women;

27. Further urge Governments to recognize gender-based persecution as a category of refugee status and to take appropriate steps to avoid all forms of discrimination against migrants, refugees and displaced persons, particularly women and children, and to protect them from abuse or denial of their human rights;
28. Ensure that there is effective dialogue and collaboration among Governments, NGOs, civil society and the private sector in the development and implementation of strategies designed to improve women's status and bring about gender equality and equity;
29. Be advocates for women's empowerment and gender equality and oversee the implementation of the goals and recommendations of the ICPD and FWCW, paying particular attention to the need to mobilize the resources required to translate the goals and recommendations into reality;
30. Appeal to Governments to support the views of the women of the world to vigorously oppose the dumping of nuclear waste and the testing of nuclear weapons, especially in the Pacific where people are imposed upon and powerless to prevent the resumption of nuclear testing;
31. Urge the donor community to strive to fulfill the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for overall official development assistance and to earmark 50 per cent of the share of this for women and gender-related activities as well as for population activities, and to monitor the use of these resources;
32. Urge also interested developed and developing country partners, on a mutual basis, to allocate, on average, 20 per cent of official development assistance and 20 per cent of the national budget to basic social programmes, especially by reducing military expenditures;
33. Urge Governments to maintain or increase funding levels for women and gender-related programmes, especially during periods of budget reductions and under structural adjustment and economic recovery programmes;
34. Urge international financial institutions to ensure that structural adjustment and economic recovery programmes are sensitive and address to social and gender-related issues and needs;
35. Generate public support among constituents for the mobilization and allocation of adequate domestic resources to support policies and programmes that will advance gender equality,

promote social development and address pertinent population issues with special attention to rural and peri-urban communities.

We hereby commit ourselves to translate into political action the recommendations set forth in this Declaration and to ensure that the achievements of the ICPD are reaffirmed both during our participation at the Fourth World Conference on Women and in our national legislatures.